

more in taxes under this proposal. That is a violation of President Biden's promise that families earning less than \$400,000 will not pay a single penny more in taxes. You just can't reconcile those two positions.

That is only the beginning of the mounting costs this bill creates for hard-working American families and my constituents in Texas. The so-called free childcare in this bill will end up costing many families a lot of money. A left-leaning think tank found that middle-class families could pay up to \$13,000 more a year for childcare. That is not a price increase on the top 1 percent; that is for people who earn more than their State's median income, which in Texas is just under \$62,000. It is hard to imagine a family who brings home \$62,000 a year being able to absorb another \$13,000 in childcare expenses.

Then come the mounting energy costs. We all know, when we go fill up the tanks of our vehicles, that gas prices are up more than 60 percent from 1 year ago, and this year, energy bills are expected to soar by as much as 54 percent. Our Democratic colleagues, by pushing so much money out the door, chasing so many limited goods and services, are pushing for policies that will actually exacerbate inflation and make these prices climb even higher.

Specifically, they want to attack the fossil fuel industry by imposing a so-called methane fee on gas companies and resurrect an excise tax on each barrel of crude oil. But these price increases won't just be absorbed by the companies that produce oil and gas; this will be an expense that is passed on to customers. If families are struggling to cover their transportation costs today, they will be up the creek without a paddle once these new taxes and fees go into effect.

The cash grab does not end there. This bill would also require hard-working Texas families to subsidize the cost of our colleagues' preferred green initiatives. It provides hundreds of billions of dollars in so-called green subsidies for massive corporations to become eco-friendly. That is right—our Democratic colleagues are proposing more subsidies for corporations, as if Fortune 500 companies need taxpayer assistance to go green.

Wealthy Americans earning hundreds of thousands of dollars each year could receive up to \$12,500 in taxpayer assistance if they buy an electric vehicle. Unfortunately, this also includes a little bit of cronyism in it because our Democratic colleagues are making sure that their party's most loyal supporters reap the benefits of this taxpayer-backed handout. The electric vehicle tax credits are even more generous if the car is made in a union shop even though there is no evidence that these vehicles are somehow better for the environment.

We all know what is happening here. It is all too clear. But, again, hard-

working American families will be the ones footing the bill for these tax credits that disproportionately benefit the wealthy and organized labor.

To help cover the sky-high price of this bill, our Democratic colleagues want to ensure that Uncle Sam will be able to squeeze each and every penny possible out of middle-class families and small businesses. This bill gives the Internal Revenue Service, which has been notorious for its abuse of power, even more money and more authority. This bill would give the IRS \$80 billion, more than half of which will build an army of auditors to poke and prod working families' finances. Instead of building back America, this builds up the bureaucracy, much to the detriment of Texas families. After all, it is going to take a lot of taxpayer money to pay for President Biden's zero-dollar bill.

This reckless tax-and-spending spree is not what our country needs, particularly not at this time, Mr. President. Families don't want an even bigger government that reaches deeper into their pockets and exerts more and more control over their daily lives. They want the freedom to make their own decisions for themselves and their families and the opportunity to succeed based on their hard work. That is not what we are seeing today from the national Democratic Party.

Our Democratic colleagues' bill takes steps toward Medicare for All by harshly penalizing States that didn't expand Medicaid. When the Affordable Care Act mandated a Medicaid expansion, the Supreme Court of the United States characterized that as a gun to the head for the States and said that was unconstitutional. But we know that Medicare for All will discourage medical innovation by slapping arbitrary price controls on things like prescription drugs.

It turns the IRS into the government's No. 1 welfare Agency by extending no-strings-attached welfare checks into perpetuity. It proposes the highest income tax rate in the developed world. It gives Washington bureaucrats unprecedented power to punish States that fail to meet arbitrary climate mandates. It forces hard-working taxpayers to cover the bill for another unnecessary partisan spending spree.

This far-left turn is not what the American people thought they were voting for in 2020, and, frankly, it is members of the President's own party who are beginning to tap the brakes in resisting this huge government expansion and huge spending spree, which will do nothing to address the rising concern of inflation in the country.

So we are simply not going to join our colleagues in voting for this reckless tax-and-spending spree, and we will continue to do everything we can to expose the components of this bill because, frankly, I think the more the American people learn about what is in the bill, the less likely they will be to support it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll, please.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SEAN COOLEY AND SPECIALIST CHRISTOPHER HORTON CONGRESSIONAL GOLD STAR FAMILY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, last week, the Senate passed the Sergeant First Class Sean Cooley and Specialist Christopher Horton Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program Act.

I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who lent their support, because creation of this program was a long time coming.

I have spent the past few years working with and talking with Gold Star families, and the one thing they have consistently told me is that they want a more powerful voice here on Capitol Hill.

This legislation will create a Senate fellowship program open only to Gold Star family members. These fellows will have the opportunity to come to Washington, at no cost to their families, and work within the system our servicemembers work so very hard to defend.

And, Madam President, we thank you for your service in defense of this Nation.

Just as we here in the Senate are bound together by a duty to serve the country, Gold Star families are also bound together by a common thread of loss, grief, sacrifice.

It has been my privilege to work with so many of them, and I hope that these fellowships will create a renewed sense of healing and purpose in the hearts of those who come to work with us here in Washington.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, it is the week before Thanksgiving, and the American people are still looking for evidence that President Biden and his lieutenants in Congress took their oaths of office seriously.

I have said it before, but it does bear repeating. The anger and division that has held the American discourse hostage for the past 11 months was not created by an increased desire to engage in contrarian politics.

Nobody asked for this—for what is happening now, no. This is a direct result of President Biden and the Democrats' refusal to actually govern and deliver for the American people. They have been so focused on creating a narrative that they have neglected the fundamentals and, ultimately, the people who put them into their positions of power.

This isn't just my opinion. I have heard it from thousands of Tennesseans

that I have visited with, many over the past week. Yes, this is their assumption. It is their assumption that anything the White House does is coming from a place of bad faith. It is not coming from “how do we make the lives of Tennesseans and all Americans better?” It comes from a place of “how do we gut our institutions? How do we roll back; and how do we exert our control, power, control, government control, Big Government?” That is what people are seeing.

Think about it. It has taken only 11 months for the people to lose their faith in this administration. No amount of ad hoc bipartisanship is going to pull the Biden administration out of the hole that they have dug for themselves by refusing to do the bare minimum for the American people. They have had 11 months to do something, to do anything, to show us they care about more than politics. And the fact that they haven't been willing to do that has been probably the biggest failure of President Biden to date.

And I think that is probably saying something. When people look at what is happening in Washington, here is what they are seeing: They see a President who proactively kills jobs, who destroyed our potential for energy independence, who let conditions along our southern border descend into chaos rather than challenge the disgraceful racial politics pushed by radicals in the Democratic Party. And they see their elected representatives waging war on our most fundamental constitutional rights, eroding ballot integrity and providing cover for disastrous economic policies that have done nothing but kill jobs and drive prices through the roof. Yes, inflation is real.

Congressional Democrats have squandered an entire year creating an illusion of enthusiasm for their broken agenda, which is a feat they were only able to accomplish by refusing to acknowledge the damage caused by their reckless tax-and-spending spree.

If they had even pretended to prioritize appropriations, the debt ceiling, or passing a fiscally responsible budget, they might have had a chance to salvage a little bit of credibility. But, oh, no, that is not what they did.

The American people are living in the real world, where debt burdens matter, and you can't fire up a money printer if you blow your budget or have a wish list you can't afford.

What the American people see isn't just a refusal to govern, but a refusal to acknowledge that these problems matter. These things actually matter to people: how much we spend matters; being job and business friendly matters; integrity, it matters.

For almost a year, the Biden administration has been hiding from allegations that the Obama-Biden Justice Department spied on an incoming President.

Back in August, I led a letter with more than 40 of my Republican colleagues demanding an update on the

status of Special Counsel Durham's inquiry into the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.

The American people have been waiting a long time to see those results. There is nothing the administration can do to force them to accept or even tolerate the malice and corruption we know fueled the actions of the Obama-Biden Justice Department, and equal justice matters to the American people.

But I suppose it is too much to ask that our chief law enforcement officers stay true to the law when the President himself has been so preoccupied with this reckless agenda that it appears he forgot about his role of being Commander in Chief.

In terms of governance, national defense is about as fundamental as it gets. And here we are, a week before Thanksgiving, and just now we are getting the NDAA to the floor.

I, along with other members of the Armed Services Committee, negotiated and deliberated our way through 143 amendments—many of those bipartisan—and we approved the final product 23 to 3.

Now, that is about as bipartisan as it gets. But you haven't seen that come to the floor. Even the House Democrats, working on their own version of the bill, have had enough with the Senate, and they are saying so publicly. They understand, just as we do, that this country will have to be able to defend itself.

We should be doing all we can to prioritize defense policy because you can be sure our competitors and our adversaries abroad are doing all they can to elevate themselves, to defend themselves.

Tonight, President Biden is scheduled to meet virtually with Xi Jinping and to discuss “ways to responsibly manage the competition” between the U.S. and China.

Only it is really not competition. They are our adversary. We don't need a summit to figure out a response to Chinese aggression. The solution is staring us in the face: If you want to manage the competition, you set yourself up to win the fight.

That is how you manage your competitors. That is it. No secret.

And I don't discount the importance of diplomacy, but Xi Jinping and his lieutenants in the Chinese Communist Party have proven time and again that their standing operating procedure is rooted in a desire to control the world—to control the world—order, rather than to work within it. Competition they are not interested in. Dominance, yes, they are interested in.

If we start engaging with China from anything other than a position of strength, we will lose. And right now, Joe Biden projects nothing but weakness.

For almost 3 years, I have chronicled in excruciating detail the war the Chinese Communist Party is waging against our Nation's ideals. I have done

this in hopes that my colleagues across the aisle would understand that delaying action or maintaining the status quo will not save us from our most beligerent and dangerous adversary.

And yet, somehow, seeing it all laid out in black and white wasn't even enough to get action. Seeing the evidence of genocide in Xinjiang wasn't enough.

Reading verified reports that Beijing manipulated multiple international organizations in their shameless coverup of the origins of COVID-19—that wasn't enough.

Listening to Chinese officials threaten our pharmaceutical and medical supply chains—not enough.

Watching the Chinese Communist Party attack freedom fighters in Hong Kong and threaten our friends in Taiwan wasn't enough.

Seeing the pernicious effects of the Belt and Road Initiative on the global balance of power wasn't enough.

Not even the knowledge that Beijing gets closer than ever to testing the limits of our nuclear deterrence capabilities—that was not enough.

Madam President, I yield to the majority leader.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Tennessee for yielding, and in a few minutes, I intend to take the first procedural step to begin consideration of the annual Defense policy bill. With cooperation, the Senate can and should move through this important legislation that we attend to each year.

This year, we will amend the Defense bill to include the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, the historic manufacturing and innovation bill that the Senate passed earlier this year on a strong bipartisan basis and which will help tackle our Nation's supply chain crisis. Our supply chain crisis needs attending to, and we cannot wait. Members from both sides of the aisle have expressed interest in getting this done.

Passing USICA would be an essential far-reaching step that Congress could take to help fight inflation, help increase American workers' wages, and relieve strained supply chains, particularly with regard to the current devastating chip shortage that is hurting the auto industry, the tech industry, and so many other industries. We cannot allow us to become dependent on foreign chips, especially when we do—we do the groundbreaking technology.

We are also working with the Speaker and our colleagues in the House and Republican colleagues in the Senate to find a path forward to get this important legislation over the finish line before the end of the year.

It is also my intention to have an amendment vote on the bipartisan legislation, repealing the 2002 Iraq war AUMF. This measure was reported on a bipartisan basis out of the Foreign Relations Committee earlier this year,